

MEMORANDUM FOR Members, Greater Fairbanks Military Retiree Council

SUBJECT: Minutes of Meeting, Greater Fairbanks Military Retiree Council (1 March 2004)

1. Under the provisions of AR 600-8-7, Retirement Services Program, the Greater Fairbanks Military Retiree Council met 1 March 2004, 7:00 p.m., Last Frontier Club. Chairperson Richard Miller presided.

2. Present:

Doris Mercer	Richard Miller
Terry Miller	Mary Alice Jackson
Ed Kirk	Ladd McBride
Dave King	Beth King
Wally Cox	Ralph Miller
Diane Miller	
Colonel William Gamble, Commander, MEDDAC	
LTC Raymond Hynson, DENTAC	
CSM Michael Bunting, Fort Wainwright Garrison CSM	
SSG Faber, AER Program Manager	
Anna VanHoueln, AAFES	
Stephen Paulas, Commissary	
Rosie Shearer, Clinic Manager, VA Clinic	
Gail Scarborough, RSO	

3. Chairperson Richard Miller called the meeting to order at 7:05p.m. Members stood for the Pledge of Allegiance. Introductions were made.

4. Minutes: Minutes were corrected to add 1 May to item #5. Approved as corrected.

5. Committee Reports:

a. Legislative: Richard stated military retired organizations will focus efforts on expanding concurrent receipt and improving SBP to eliminate the reduction in benefits at spouse's age 62. CRSC has been expanded to include disabilities rated at 10% or more which are combat related. This expands the original program which required disability ratings of 60% or higher. The new application should be available soon.

b. Well Being: Richard attended the Well Being meeting. He stated the committee will focus on the personal, physical, mental and social status and serve all categories. Much of the information deals with active soldiers. He spoke to the committee regarding the issue of travel for medical care for persons not enrolled in TriCare Prime. He stated new items will be added and prioritized during upcoming meetings. Please contact Richard with any issues/concerns you have for this committee.

c. AAFES: Anna VanHoueln stated that Charley's Steakery should open this weekend. Baskin Robbins and Seattle's Best will open mid-March.

d. Commissary: Stephen Paulas stated renovation is scheduled for May. Work will include improving the lighting in the store. There will be no interruption of service.

6. Program:

a. VA Clinic: Rosie Shearer, Clinic Manager, spoke to the Council regarding services at Bassett Army Hospital. In 1998, the VA placed a Contact Representative at Bassett Army Hospital. At that time, the VA was doing fee based care and veterans received care downtown. The staff was expanded to include

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a Nurse Practitioner and an Internal Medicine Physician. Services have grown on the years and currently, they are treating 1300 patients. At one time, they had a waiting list of 600 veterans. Currently, there is no waiting list. All patients are now scheduled and everyone should be seen by mid-April. Some specialty care is available. Orthopedics and audiology are available once a month. The VA has a good working relationship with the Army. Enrollments are no longer handled in the Clinic; all applications are sent to Anchorage for processing. Wally Cox asked if the position was lost due to the transfer of enrollment processing to Anchorage. Rosie stated that the position was still here and they were recruiting to fill the slot. Council members commented on the excellent, dedicated staff at the Clinic. For other veterans' services, i.e., housing, education, eligibility questions, contact the Vet Center in Fairbanks. Volunteers are always welcome.

b. AER Program: SSG Faber stated the AER Program is available to assist with a variety of emergencies. Requests for assistance with emergency travel and car repairs are the most frequently handled. SSG Faber stated that only five retirees applied for assistance last year and he was concerned that the retired community was not aware that they are also eligible for assistance through the AER Program. AER can provide interest free loans and in some cases grants. AER may be able to assist with travel for medical care outside the immediate area. For assistance, the medical care can not be elective in nature. Assistance can be provided to all branches of service and then forwarded to the appropriate relief agency. AER regulation restricts solicitation for donations to persons who are eligible for the program. AER is located in Building 3401, phone number is 353-4237. Contact the COC after duty hours. SSG Faber provided members with information sheet on the AER program.

7. Old Business:

a. Retiree Appreciation Day: Scheduled for 1 May 2004. Colonel Gamble stated MEDDAC is looking forward to participating in the annual RAD. Stated the new hospital is really coming together and hopes to add a tour of the new facility to the activities. LTC Hynson stated DENTAC will be available at the RAD to provide information on dental health and the retired dental program.

b. Keeping Our Promise to America's Military Retirees Act: Ladd McBride stated he has received no answers from Senator Stevens, Senator Murkowski or Congressman Young regarding this issue. Stated pre-1956 veterans are dying at a rate of 1500 per day. Wally Cox stated this is a good time to put pressure on Administration during this election year.

8. New Business: Blue Star Banner – Wally Cox stated that the VFW, Golden Heart Post, has found a source for the Blue Star Banners and is giving them to families with members in Iraq and Afghanistan. Please let Wally know of any families that qualify.

9. Announcements: Wally Cox invited everyone to the Ice Park on 6 March, 8:00 p.m., for the presentation of the Ice Sculpture of the Soldier in Iraq with Child. Sculpture was completed by artist who did Hussein bronze in Iraq.

10. Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

11. Next Meeting: 5 April 2004, 7:00 p.m., Last Frontier Club.

RICHARD MILLER
CHAIRPERSON

I have reviewed these minutes.

Gail Scarborough
RSO

